

July 16, 2017

A newly ordained priest in the parish was having trouble finding a way to start his first homily. So, he asked the pastor for a suggestion and the pastor said, "Start with something that's certain to grab their attention. For example, you might say, Some of the best years of my life were spent in the arms of a woman who was someone else's wife". The pastor smiled at the shocked expression on the associate's face and said, 'My Mother". That Sunday the parish's young priest ascended the pulpit, sweating and shaking. Finally he said, "The Pastor told me that some of the best years of his life were spent in the arms of a woman that was another man's wife." He looked at the shocked expression on their faces, he had their attention, and all of a sudden his nerves just came back and he said, "For the life of me I can't remember who he said she was....."

Today, I had a choice as to whether I do the long form or the short form of the Gospel. I chose the short form because I believe most of us already know that Jesus is the sower, the seed is God's word, and that God's word is not accepted by all. Not everyone responds in the same way to God's word. Some ignored Jesus, some received his message with enthusiasm but, then the cares of the world came back and choked it out. All these different reasons why people, even to today, don't take God's word to heart. And then some people, we call them saints and we call them holy people, are able to take it, accept it, and live good lives. Jesus was telling the apostles a reason why not everyone accepted his word with the excitement that they did. It's a parable so rich in meaning, it has other interpretations as well.

I came across a delightful story by Megan McKenna. In her book, *Parables: The Arrows of God*, which gives us another way of looking at today's parable. There was a woman who was depressed over the state of the world. She longed for love among her family and friends; peace among all people, compassion for the poor and vulnerable. All the things that were bringing her down. There were problems everywhere and she saw so much selfishness, greed, hatred, lack of morality. One day, she was out shopping and she came across this cute little store, so she decided to go in. She walked in and was surprised to see someone behind the counter and he reminded her of Jesus. She couldn't believe it, but, the similarity was so striking she just had to ask him. So she went up and she said, "Are you Jesus?" He said, "Yes, I Am."

"Do you work here?"

"No, I own the shop."

"What do you sell here?"

"Well, I really don't sell anything, everything I have is free." "I have just what you want, you just have to go walk through the aisle and make a list of what you want and bring it up front, and I'll fulfil it." So she did and she was amazed. She saw; 'Peace One Earth', on the shelf, she saw, 'Food To Feed The Hungry, Clean Air & Water, Warm Clothing For The Poor, Forgiveness,' all the things that she was looking for. She compiled a long, long list and she brought it to Jesus. When Jesus looked at the items she had written down, he said, "No problem", and reached down behind the counter and started going through some boxes and he picked up some packets and he put them on the counter and said, "Here you go." She said, "What are these?" "Seed packets", said Jesus. "This is a catalog store." "You mean I don't get

the finished product?" "No", Jesus said, "just take these seeds home, plant them and nurture them and help them grow, and you'll be quite pleased with the results." She said, "Ugh" and left the store without taking anything.

Most of us want God to solve all of our problems and the world's problems over night. Once in a while that happens and that's great, but most evenings he gives us the means and the help we need and calls us to have faith and patience. Living by God's Word, it will not disappoint us. But we have to live by God's Word. As God promised in today's first reading, "My Word will not return to me void, but shall do My will, achieving the end for which I want." We can either be the ones who put God's word into practice and help solve the problems of our families, our communities and the world, or, we can be of the three types of people that said, "No, not me," and then God just takes a little bit longer to solve the problems of the world. God Bless You